

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

At a meeting of the **Cabinet** held at County Hall, Morpeth on Thursday 27 July 2017 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillor P.A. Jackson
(Leader of the Council, in the Chair)

CABINET MEMBERS

Daley, W.
Homer, C.
Jones, V.
Oliver, N.

Riddle, J.
Sanderson, H.G.H.
Wearmouth, R.

OTHER MEMBERS

Davey, J.G.
Dodd, R.R.
Gobin, J.J.
Hutchinson, J.I.

Moore, R.
Pattison, W.
Reid, J.
Watson, J.G.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Hadfield, K.

Henry, L.
Ketley, M.
Lally, D.
Simpson, P.
Turner, M.

Committee Services and Scrutiny
Manager
Legal Services Manager
Head of Planning Services
Interim Chief Executive
Public Health Protection Manager
Head of Property and Capital
Programming

Around 8 members of the press and public were present.

10. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on Tuesday 11 July 2017, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

11. REPORT OF THE INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan

The report sought approval to formally 'make' the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan passed independent examination in December 2015. A local referendum held in the Parishes of Alnwick, Denwick and Denwick Detached in June 2017 returned a majority vote in favour of using the Plan to make decisions on planning applications. The Council was now obliged by statute to make the Neighbourhood Plan unless it considered that doing so would breach European Union obligations (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix A, alongside the report of the Communities and Place OSC circulated at the meeting).

The report was presented by Councillor Riddle who outlined the extensive process which had been undertaken, the level of public support for the Plan and the officer support provided to deliver it.

Councillor Reid presented the report of the Communities and Place OSC. The Committee had been satisfied that the process had been correctly followed.

Members commended the Plan and the work done by officers.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the referendum outcome of 15 June 2017 be noted;
- (2) Cabinet agree to formally 'make' the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with section 38A(4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004;
- (3) Cabinet approve the decision notice (attached to the report at Appendix 1) required under Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended;
- (4) the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan and the decision notice be published on the Council's website and publicised elsewhere in order to bring it to the attention of people who live, work or carry out business in the neighbourhood area; and the decision notice be sent to the qualifying body and anyone else who asked to be notified of the decision; and

- (5) the report of the Communities and Place OSC be noted.

12. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND ECONOMY

Interim Planning Policy Position Statement

The report sought approval for the introduction and implementation of an Interim Planning Policy Position Statement following withdrawal of the Northumberland Local Plan: Core Strategy Pre-Submission Draft Plan from submission, in order to assist those interested in development proposals by clarifying the general approach to be taken to planning applications whilst a review of the Core Strategy was undertaken (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B, alongside the report of the the Communities and Place OSC circulated at the meeting).

Councillor Riddle introduced the report advising members that, following legal advice, the title should be amended to delete the word “policy” as the position statement was not policy, simply advice to developers and the public. Mr Ketley confirmed that Counsel’s advice was that this should be deleted to ensure that it was clear that the position statement had no “policy” status.

Councillor Reid highlighted the main points of the report from Scrutiny. Councillor Riddle advised that, whilst he could accept the first recommendation from Scrutiny regarding the revised title, he could not accept the second recommendation regarding the additional introductory paragraph.

A number of points were made by members including the following:-

- Councillor Homer queried whether the plans detailed in paragraph 1.6 of the report would still carry the same weight as they had previously. Mr Ketley confirmed that they would.
- Councillor Jones queried whether the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan just agreed would be included in this list of plans with the others and Mr Ketley confirmed that it would.
- With reference to the comments on page two regarding job loss issues, Councillor Homer queried whether the wording used was leading the Authority towards a conclusion and whether a general comment was more appropriate. She did not necessarily support the correlation that more houses brought more jobs, and an economic strategy for the County in line with the work of the NE LEP was crucial in this review. Mr Ketley advised that this was the agreed reason for the decision to withdraw the Core Strategy by Council on 5 July 2017 and had been included for factual purposes, and work on the Core Strategy would assess the issue.
- The Leader commented that it was important to be clear on how easily the existing planning policies could be carried through, particularly with regard to the green belt. Mr Ketley advised that the policies included within the documents listed in paragraph 1.6 of the report formed the

statutory development plan and, by law, these provided the starting point for assessing planning applications. Development proposals in areas of outstanding natural beauty and green belt would continue to be assessed against national policy standards, which would provide a high degree of protection in these areas.

- The Leader also commented on the extent of the landbank and the number of plots with existing planning permissions. Mr Ketley confirmed that within the current plan period of 2011-31, there had been 5,700 housing completions, with a further 12,500 current permissions in place for committed units. The Leader commented that this represented a ten year supply.
- Councillor Oliver queried what protection was provided by the national planning policy framework where policies were silent on the green belt. Mr Ketley advised that this protection was stronger than it had been previously under the District Councils following publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012 which is clear that very special circumstances must exist to justify inappropriate development proposals in the Green Belt..

Councillor Riddle's recommendation that the title of the Position Statement be revised as per the Scrutiny report, was seconded by Councillor Sanderson.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** unanimously that:-

- (a) the Position Statement Following Withdrawal of the Draft Core Strategy (attached at Appendix 1) be approved for implementation with immediate effect;
- (b) the Position Statement Following Withdrawal of the Draft Core Strategy be published on the Council's website and publicised elsewhere in order to bring it to the attention of all stakeholders in the planning process;
- (c) recommendation (1) of the report of the Communities and Place OSC be accepted (as detailed in resolutions (a) and (b) above; and
- (d) recommendation (2) of the report of the Communities and Place OSC **not** be accepted.

13. REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Food and Feed, Safety and Standards Service Plan 2017-18

The report presented to the Cabinet the Food and Feed, Safety and Standards Service Plan for 2017/18 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix C, alongside the report of the the Communities and Place OSC circulated at the meeting).

Councillor Riddle set out the background to the report, highlighting that there were 5,474 food & feed premises in Northumberland. The review of performance in 2016/17 showed that for the third year running, the service had delivered the food & feed service plan with all the performance targets met, including 100% of high risk food safety and food standards premises inspections being completed during the year.

The plan was not just about regulatory activity, but also set out the ways in which the Authority sought to proactively support businesses and so positively contribute to the economy of Northumberland. The 'Produced in Northumberland' Verification Scheme, launched in February 2016, had been expanded during 2016/17 and was making an important contribution to the local economy in helping to promote local Northumberland produce and at the same time, through the verification audits, gave greater consumer confidence in the origin of foods produced in Northumberland. So far 63 food businesses in Northumberland had signed up to the scheme, with a further 25 having expressed an interest.

Members raised a number of comments including:-

- Councillor Sanderson felt it was important to raise the profile of the service and asked whether there was any customer feedback available. He also felt there was potential in the Produced in Northumberland scheme to expand and that this should be considered as a priority. Mr Simpson confirmed that customer feedback was sought through customer experience surveys and complaints and this information could be included in future. Opportunities for expansion were limited by resource, though he was able to confirm that there was a Produced in Northumberland presence at all food festivals in the County.
- Councillor Sanderson asked that an update be made to members in October to establish future potential, and Councillor Homer suggested that this should form part of the overall review of tourism in the County.
- Councillor Oliver queried whether there were any plans to broaden the range beyond food, for example into crafts. Members were advised that this had been considered, however, the current service expertise and delivery was around food.

Councillor Reid confirmed that Scrutiny had applauded the work of the service and had welcomed the report produced. They had asked that future reports include some benchmarking data of performance, particularly in respect of complaints

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the content of the Food and Feed, Safety and Standards Service Plan for 2017/18 be received and adopted;
- (b) further information be brought to members on the potential for expanding the Produced in Northumberland Scheme; and

(c) the report of the Communities and Place OSC be noted.

14. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PROPERTY AND CAPITAL PROGRAMMING

Summary of New Capital Proposals considered by Officer Capital Strategy Group

The report summarised proposed amendments to the Capital Programme considered by the Officer Capital Strategy Group at its meetings held on 12 April 2017, 12 May 2017 and 09 June 2017 (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix D).

The Leader referred to some additional proposals from the Officer Capital Strategy Group (copy attached to the signed minutes), which had been circulated. Members were asked to consider these today to allow the projects to get underway, and to meet project deadlines, as there were no further meetings of Cabinet until September.

The Leader highlighted the main points of note on each project.

Comments were raised as follows:-

Early Years Capital Fund - Councillor Daley commended this project adding that this was a good news story for the Authority.

ERDF Climate Change Call - Councillor Sanderson expressed support for this project and felt it was important for the public to know that the Council had invested in this scheme with partners, which would be of huge benefit to the town.

Tyne Mills and Bridge End Flood Alleviation Scheme - as the Council's representative on the Regional Flood Defence Committee, Councillor Oliver was pleased to report that the Authority was viewed as an exemplar in terms of its contribution to regional work in this area.

Haltwhistle Football Project - Councillor Sanderson expressed support for this and hoped that the work of Councillor Hutchinson, and the investment of public money by the Authority, would be acknowledged. Councillor Oliver also spoke in support.

Community Broadband - Councillor Oliver set out the background to this project. Investment would improve broadband rollout and would provide the infrastructure needed for economic regeneration. The Authority was already leading the way in rural implementation. Councillor Sanderson commended the work of John Cooper in assisting a small group of residents in the west of

his electoral division to secure broadband, adding that it was important to reach the last few % of the population who did not have access.

Ashington Annexe SEN Unit and Hexham Priory Extension - Councillor Daley welcomed the robust business cases for both projects which demonstrated a clear invest to save approach and which would improve the SEN offer within the County, reducing the number of out of county placements.

Berwick Swan Centre Gym Equipment - Councillor Homer advised that the proposed funding was part of a wider picture as a review of Active Northumberland was taking place. The equipment would provide a much needed boost and was transferable whatever decision was reached about the Swan Centre going forward.

RESOLVED that the following recommendations be agreed:-

- **Oracle E Business Upgrade:** Approve the proposal and the new capital budget requirement of £920,000 to meet the implementation costs;
- **Foundry House Car Park:** Approve the proposal and new capital budget requirement of £200,000– to be funded from Adult Care Capital Grant;
- **Solar PV West Hartford and Pegswood Fire Stations:** Approve the proposals and new capital budget requirement of £85,620 - to be met by a revenue contribution from the Fire and Rescue Service;
- **West Hartford Parking:** Approve the project and new capital budget requirement of £292,590;
- **Early Years Capital Fund:** Accept the capital grant award of £2,069,704; approve the allocation of £689,901 of Basic Need capital grant to support the project; and, note the four project settings at Bedlington West End First School; Busy Bees Nursery, Seahouses; Ashington (setting to be confirmed); and, Blyth (setting to be confirmed);
- **ERDF Climate Change Call:** Endorse the ERDF applications and approve the new budget requirement £175,000 to support initial design development costs for Seahouses Pier;
- **Haltwhistle Football Project:** Endorse the project and approve a maximum grant award of £71,000 - to be met from the existing provision within the medium term capital plan;
- **Community Broadband:** Approve the proposal and the new capital budget requirement of £1,703,000 to be met from existing Broadband programme underspends;
- **Ashington Annexe SEN Unit:** Approve Phase 1 of the project and the £1,916,610 budget requirement – to be met from the existing SEN

provision with MTFP of £1,286,000 and an additional allocation of £631,000 from the Schools Capital Improvement Programme budget;

- **Hexham Priory School Extension:** Approve the project and the £1,173,720 budget requirement – to be funded by new Council capital resource (i.e. additional borrowing), and;
- **Berwick Swan Centre Gym Equipment:** Approve expenditure on replacement gym equipment to the value of £118,000 to be funded through the Leisure Remedial Budget already included in the MTFP.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....